Appendix E

Assembly Area Operations

DESIGNATION OF ASSEMBLY AREAS

ASSEMBLY AREAS

E-1. An AA is a location where the squadron and/or troop prepares for future operations, issues orders, accomplishes maintenance, and completes resupply activities. Regardless of the type of AA the unit will occupy, the commander and staff must adher to certain principles to ensure the survivability of the unit. AAs are usually located in the corps or division rear area and in or near the aviation brigade AA. Heavy division cavalry troop may establish an AA in the vicinity of the squadron field trains rather than near the aviation brigade AA. Aviation AAs are usually located out of the range of enemy artillery and should be large enough to ensure adequate dispersion of units. An AA must provide—

- Security.
- Concealment.
- Accessibility to MSRs.
- Air avenues of approach.
- Proximity to friendly units.
- Suitable ingress and egress routes.

FORWARD ASSEMBLY AREAS

E-2. A squadron and/or troop occupies FAAs for extended periods while awaiting orders to execute missions. FAAs are located near the controlling headquarters to improve C^3I and response times. The FAA should be located out of range of enemy medium artillery. Limited maintenance personnel may be located in the FAA as contact teams jump forward to repair aircraft. Considerations for selecting FAAs are the same as those for selecting AAs.

ASSEMBLY AREA RESPONSIBILITIES

E-3. In all cases, the commander must designate who is responsible for the selection, occupation, and securing of the unit AA. Responsibilities for the AA are listed below. The commander may decide to assign these responsibilities to other people.

E-4. The squadron S3 performs the following AA duties:

- Selects future main CP sites.
- Selects site for the TOC within the main CP.
- Develops a R&S plan in conjunction with the S2.
- Establishes a “jump”, or temporary, TOC if necessary until the TOC is established at the main CP site.

- If directed by the commander, develops plans and orders for moving the AA.
- Plans for air routes and conducts airspace management for the air routes to the new AA.
- Plans for fires to support the AA move.
- Develops a plan for reconnaissance of the movement routes and new AA location.
- Plans, and requests support if necessary, for MEDEVAC assets to assist during the move.
- Coordinates with higher or adjacent units for land to establish an AA.
- Requests engineer support to assist in AA improvement.
- Coordinates and requests AD support for the AA.

E-5. The squadron XO performs the following AA duties:

- Establishes timelines for AA moves.
- Develops triggers, based upon a decision support template (developed by the S2), for displacement of the AA.
- Conducts a rehearsal of AA moves and occupations.

E-6. The CSM performs the following AA duties:

- Assists the S3 and S4 in the development of movement orders.
- Supervises the break down of the AA.
- Leads the quartering and/or advanced party, as directed by the commander.
- Supervises the establishment of the new AA.

E-7. The squadron S4 performs the following AA duties:

- Develops plans and orders for moving the AA, if directed by the commander
- Develops march tables for the vehicle convoy to the new AA.
- Selects the location for the CTCP.

E-8. The HHT commander and/or 1SG performs the following AA duties:

- Organizes the march serials, designates serial commanders, and conducts convoy briefings.
- Leads the quartering and/or advanced party, as directed by the commander.
- Selects locations for future AAs in conjunction with the S3.
- Conducts a reconnaissance of proposed AA sites.
- Selects emergency displacement AAs.

E-9. The squadron S2 performs the following AA duties:

- Develops an event template and DST for the AA, which results in DPs necessary for planning and executing AA displacement.
- Develops NAIs in the vicinity of the AA and assists the S3 in developing an R&S plan for the AA.
- Tracks the enemy situation in relation to the displacement DPs, and informs the commander when the enemy reaches the selected DPs.

- Assists the HHT Commander and S3 in selecting new AAs by conducting a threat and terrain analysis of the proposed AA location.

E-10. The communications-electronics officer, usually an NCO by MTOE, performs the following AA duties:

- Analyzes potential AA sites and determines their suitability in terms of providing communications for the squadron.
- Establishes a retransmission, if required, to assist during unit moves.
- Analyzes potential AAs for their proximity to MSE nodes.

ASSEMBLY AREA OCCUPATION

ASSEMBLY AREA

E-11. The AA is a squadron position. It is chosen based upon the mission of the squadron, a map reconnaissance, and a physical reconnaissance of the selected area. Once as AA has been selected and coordinated, it is occupied when the unit receives the order to move to and occupy the new AA. Occupation of the AA should be well planned and rehearsed. Occupation of an AA is a four-phase operation—

- Phase 1: Reconnaissance.
- Phase 2: Quartering Party and/or Advanced Party Operations.
- Phase 3: Main Body Arrival (Air and Ground).
- Phase 4: AA Improvement.

FORWARD ASSEMBLY AREA

E-12. The FAA is a squadron position occupied by squadron aircraft, the squadron TAC, and a minimum number of ground vehicles. Individual troops may also establish individual FAAs. Planning for the occupation of the FAA is not as detailed as that required for the occupation of an AA. However, because the squadron may remain in the FAA for several hours, the commander and his staff must consider security and camouflage. Occupation of the FAA is a three-phase operation—reconnaissance, main body arrival, and security.

Reconnaissance

E-13. An initial area reconnaissance (including NBC) of the FAA and the surrounding terrain is conducted. Upon completion of the area reconnaissance, a brief to the squadron commander or S3 is conducted. The new position is kept under constant observation until the main body arrives.

Main Body Arrival

E-14. Each troop arrives at the FAA as a separate unit and lands in its predetermined area. Normally, the squadron staggers the arrival of its troops by allowing several minutes to elapse between each arrival. The FAA is designed to disperse the squadron while at the same time allowing the squadron to observe all of the high-speed avenues of approach into the FAA.

Security

E-15. Security of the FAA is based on the ability of the squadron to detect threats and react to them by moving the aircraft to another location. Crews will complete a through-flight inspection of their aircraft immediately after the FAA security has been established. Squadron aircraft must be prepared for rapid departure. The priority of tasks for each troop is to—

- Establish local security.
- Establish wire communications with the TAC CP.
- Complete through-flights of aircraft.
- Continue to plan missions.

ASSEMBLY AREA RECONNAISSANCE

AREA RECONNAISSANCE

E-16. An area reconnaissance of the AA location and the surrounding terrain should be accomplished as soon as possible after the AA site has been selected. This area reconnaissance may be conducted by air or ground. If the reconnaissance is conducted by air, the aircraft should land and allow the reconnaissance party to physically walk and observe the layout of the terrain. Items to be looked for during the AA reconnaissance include suitability of the area, NBC contamination (if in a suspected NBC area), enemy activity, and concealment.

ROUTE RECONNAISSANCE

E-17. A route reconnaissance of the convoy routes should be conducted prior to the movement to the new AA location. The commander may elect to use squadron aircraft to conduct this reconnaissance. The purpose of this reconnaissance is to verify the suitability of the convoy route, locate any areas along the route that will cause delays for the convoy, determine if there is traffic on the route, and look for enemy in the area that can influence the convoy. The route reconnaissance should be conducted prior to the quartering party movement. The commander may elect to conduct continuous reconnaissance along the route during the duration of the convoy.

QUARTERING PARTY AND ADVANCED PARTY OPERATIONS

E-18. The quartering party consists of the quartering party and the advanced party. The quartering party conducts the initial occupation of the AA, which includes a reconnaissance for security and NBC contamination if it is suspected. The advanced party conducts an initial set up of the AA and prepares the site for the arrival of the main body. The quartering party and advanced party may move together or be separated by a time interval. If they move together, the advanced party will stop at a designated point outside of the new AA and wait for the quartering party to finish their operations and then the advanced party will occupy the new AA. The CSM, HHT commander, HHT 1SG, or others as designated by the commander normally lead the quartering party and advanced party. Specific responsibilities are listed below.

QUARTERING PARTY

Reconnaissance

E-19. NBC reconnaissance should be conducted if NBC contamination is suspected or likely. Prior to movement the S2 should be consulted to determine the likelihood of NBC contamination in the new AA.

Security

E-20. Security at this point may consist of establishing OPs along the most likely enemy avenues of approach.

ADVANCED PARTY

E-21. The advanced party conducts their operations after completion of the quartering party reconnaissance. The advanced party—

- Establishes security.
- Establishes communications with the TOC in the AA.
- Determines the locations of the TOC, ALOC, troop elements, and FARP.
- Confirms suitability of the area.
- Clears any safety hazards from the area.
- Establishes internal wire communications to the troop areas.
- Clears and marks aircraft parking positions.
- Establishes LP/OPs and dismount point.
- Emplaces M8 alarms.

MAIN BODY ARRIVAL (AIR AND GROUND)

E-22. The main body of the squadron should arrive in two parts, beginning with the ground vehicles and followed by the aircraft.

GROUND ARRIVAL

E-23. Members of the advanced party meet the ground vehicles when they arrive. The advanced party guides the ground vehicles along a selected route to each troop's position. The priority of tasks upon closure of the main body is to—

- Establish security. (The type and amount of security is dependent on the factors of METT-TC, and may range from establishing LP/OPs along the most likely enemy avenues of approach to full perimeter security. The CSM must consult with the S2 to determine the threat and establish security that will meet that threat.)
- Reestablish the TOC. (Communications should be established with HHQ as soon as possible after occupation of the AA. **Note:** Communications with HHQ must never be lost. The advanced party must establish communications with HHQ before breaking down and moving the TOC.)
- Emplace camouflage netting.

- Establish individual fighting positions and survivability positions.
- Establish crew served weapons fighting positions.
- Establish a dismount point.
- Coordinate with adjacent units for security. Ensure that coordination and communications with adjacent units are established if the adjacent unit is within range of the squadron's direct fire weapons systems.
- Develop R&S plan. (The S2 develops NAIs and the S3 develops a plan to keep the NAIs under observation.)
- Submit sector sketches to the squadron. (Troops submit sector sketches for incorporation into the squadron security plan.)
- Establish a QRF.
- Conduct accountability of all personnel and weapons.

AIR ARRIVAL

E-24. Squadron aircraft should arrive after the ground portion of the main body. During AA movement, the squadron must consider and make provisions for maintaining communications with the squadron aircraft located at the previous AA site. When the aircraft arrive they should be positioned in a predetermined location selected by the advanced party. The location of the aircraft should provide the maximum concealment possible. The aircraft should not park too close together. Upon arrival, aircrews should complete a postflight inspection, report any problems to the commander, and assist in the establishment of the AA.

ASSEMBLY AREA IMPROVEMENT

E-25. The AA is continuously improved as time allows. Some key areas that require improvements are field sanitation, ground obstacles, camouflage, and maintenance and living conditions. Continuous camouflaging must be conducted to reduce the radar, heat, noise, electronic, and visual signatures of the squadron.

ASSEMBLY AREA SECURITY

E-26. Security of an AA is a difficult task for all aviation units. Limited personnel make this a challenging, but not impossible, task. The squadron and/or troop can accomplish the basics of AA security, which leads to force protection.

OBSTACLES

E-27. All roads leading into the AA that are not necessary for AA operations should be blocked with obstacles and covered with overlapping fields of fire. Obstacles may be natural or man-made. Assistance in emplacing obstacles may be necessary. The squadron may have to coordinate with higher for engineer assistance in planning, preparing, executing, and completing tasks in defense of the AA (see FM 5-100).

OBSTACLE DEVELOPMENT

E-28. Engineer support can construct, repair, and maintain tactical obstacles, defensive positions, and logistics field sites within the AAs. Protected positions can be prepared for CPs, aircraft parking, FARPs, and maintenance facilities (see FMs 5-100-15 and 5-71-100).

FIGHTING POSITIONS

E-29. The squadron and/or troop establishes crew served fighting positions that cover the most likely enemy avenues of approach. The fighting positions should be continuously occupied. Range cards must be prepared and present, so that new guard shifts are aware of their responsibilities in securing the AA.

LISTENING POSTS AND/OR OBSERVATION POSTS

E-30. The squadron may establish LP/OPs in the vicinity of the AA. The purpose of these locations is to provide early warning to the squadron of anyone approaching the AA. LP/OPs should be placed along the most likely enemy avenues of approach and far enough away from the AA to provide adequate warning to the squadron of impending attack. The LP/OP must maintain communications with the TOC.

DISMOUNT POINT

E-31. The squadron may establish a dismount point to control the flow of traffic in and out of the AA. If engineer support is available, the remainder of the AA may be blocked (berms may be established around the AA). The dismount point controls traffic flow in and out of the AA, and raises suspicion on any vehicle that is approaching the AA from a direction other than the dismount point.

INDIRECT FIRE

E-32. The squadron may plan indirect fire in the vicinity of the AA. Final protective fires are established to protect the squadron during a displacement due to enemy attack. The LP/OPs may also have responsibility for FS targets within their area. When planning indirect fire for the AA, the commander must develop an observer plan.

ASSEMBLY AREA RECONNAISSANCE AND SURVEILLANCE PLAN

E-33. The S2 and S3 work together to establish an R&S plan for the squadron. The S2 does a thorough analysis of the area and develops NAIs. The S3 develops a plan for reconnaissance of those NAIs. The reconnaissance plan may consist of aerial reconnaissance by squadron aircraft, or it may consist of ground reconnaissance by LP/OPs or ground vehicles.

DISPLACEMENT ASSEMBLY AREAS

E-34. The squadron must establish locations for both the ground vehicles and aircraft to scatter to in the event of an emergency displacement. These areas may not be the same place. As soon as possible after arrival at the AA site, scatter locations must be selected. All squadron aircrews and vehicle

drivers must know the location of the scatter site and the route to get to the site. Strip maps should be prepared for each vehicle and aircraft, and a sketch of the emergency displacement plan should be located in the TOC.

FRIENDLY AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY

E-35. Coordination should be made with friendly ADA units that may be in the vicinity of the AA. These units may be able to provide the aviation unit with area AD coverage of the AA. If not, the squadron can request from higher for AD assets to cover critical squadron assets. Additionally, coordination should be made with friendly ADA units to ensure they are aware of the presence of friendly aircraft in the area. These ADA units may be able to assist in checking IFF equipment by interrogating squadron aircraft as they depart and arrive at the AA.

ASSEMBLY AREA DISPLACEMENT

E-36. A squadron is most vulnerable while occupying AAs. If the squadron comes under artillery, air, or ground attack, it will conduct an emergency displacement. The two types of plans for displacement are the surprise and early warning displacement. The displacement plan is part of the security for the AA and must be established as soon as possible after occupation of the AA. Displacement plans for each troop will consist of the direction and route for leaving the AA, location of HAs, and alternate AAs. Areas to which the squadron will displace must be coordinated for through HHQ. Once established in the AA, the unit should conduct a rehearsal of the displacement to ensure all procedures are understood by the squadron elements. See figure E-1 for an example of a troop scatter plan.

SURPRISE DISPLACEMENT

E-37. In the event of a surprise attack, the squadron will conduct an immediate displacement. Aircraft will depart individually if the situation allows. For survivability, it may be necessary for the flight crews to remain in their individual fighting positions or survivability positions until the immediate threat has passed before executing the displacement. Upon departing the AA, the aircraft move to the designated holding area or scatter site, conduct a reconnaissance, establish security, and establish communications with the TOC or command group, and transmits a situation report to the commander.

EARLY WARNING DISPLACEMENT

E-38. An early warning displacement occurs after thorough planning has been accomplished.

E-39. During initial set-up of the AA, the S2 develops an event template and a DST for AA displacement. The DST results in DPs that the squadron commander can use as triggers for AA displacement. Once the DPs are determined, the S2 and S3 determine the best method for tracking the enemy situation in relation to the selected DPs.

E-40. Based upon the DPs established by the S2, the commander designates REDCON levels for the squadron. As each DP is reached, the squadron

upgrades their readiness level and conducts sequential preparations for displacement. As the DPs are reached, the squadron gets more prepared to move, so when the enemy reaches the DP that calls for the AA to displace, the squadron is already prepared to move. Establishing REDCON levels ensures that the squadron is ready to move immediately when required and ensures that essential equipment is not left behind during the displacement.

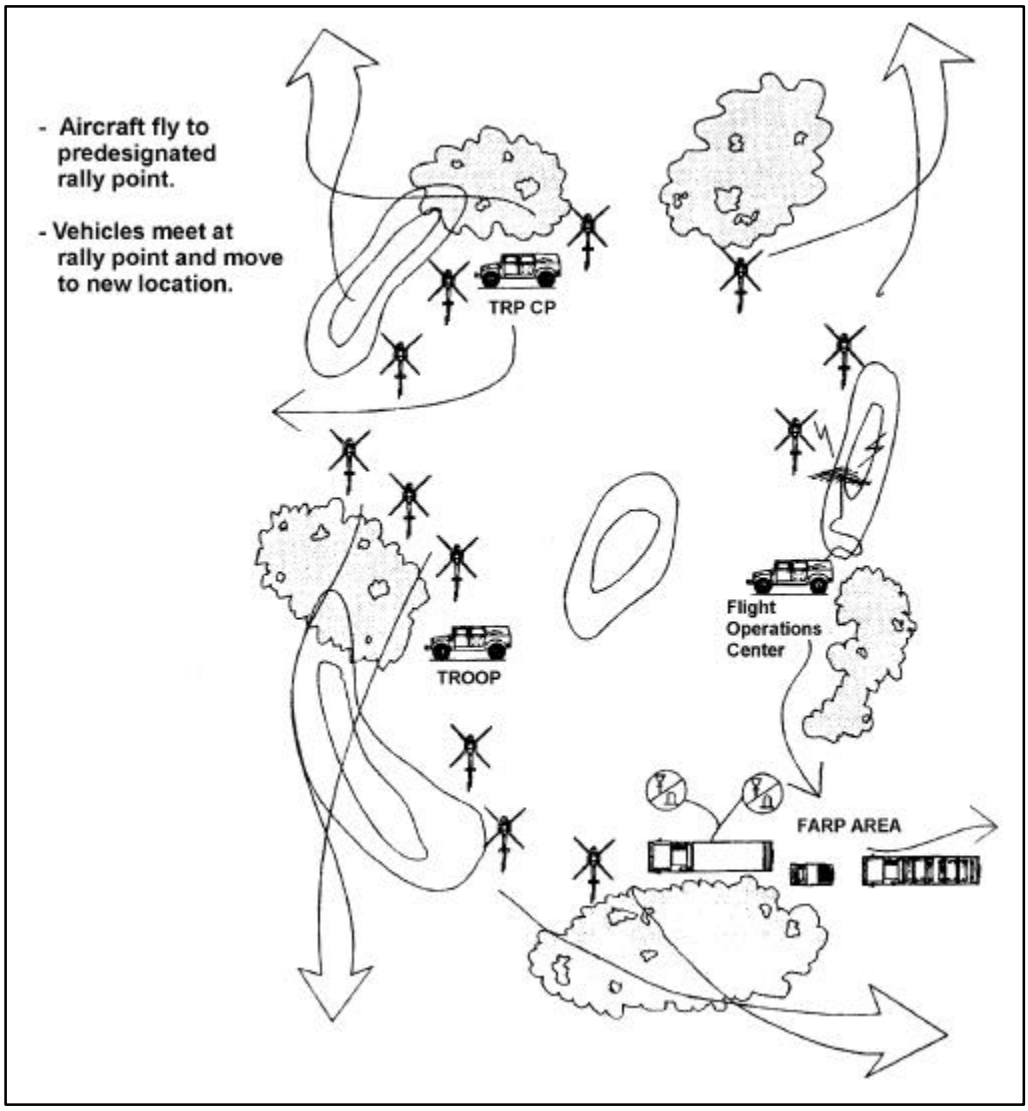

Figure E-1. ACT Scatter Plan